



Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of The Markfield Institute of Higher Education

April 2016

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at The Markfield Institute of Education. The review took place from 18 to 20 April 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Mr John Deane
- Dr Sylvia Hargreaves.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by The Markfield Institute of Higher Education and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)¹ setting out what all UK [higher education providers](#) expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
 - the quality of student learning opportunities
 - the information provided about higher education provision
 - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

In reviewing The Markfield Institute of Higher Education the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The [themes](#) for the academic year 2015-16 are Student Employability, and Digital Literacy,² and the provider is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.³ A dedicated section explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).⁴ For an explanation of terms see the [glossary](#) at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code

² Higher Education Review themes: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859

³ QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

⁴ Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about The Markfield Institute of Higher Education

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at The Markfield Institute of Higher Education.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its degree-awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at The Markfield Institute of Higher Education.

- The extensive use of related subject benchmarks and externality, which informs programme development (Expectation A3.1).
- The use of external expertise in the internal peer review process, which makes a significant contribution to the development of learning and teaching (Expectation B3).
- The culture engendered by the Institute for capturing the student voice, which leads to a high level of engagement in formal committees (Expectation B5).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** to The Markfield Institute of Higher Education.

By September 2016:

- establish and clearly document formal reporting lines for the higher education deliberative structures (Expectation A2.1)
- ensure all modifications to programmes are approved through Newman University processes (Expectation A3.1)
- amend the English language requirements for overseas entrants to the postgraduate taught programmes to ensure that students are adequately prepared for their programme (Expectation B2)
- formally document and implement the processes for the approval of published information about higher education programmes, and ensure that all information is complete and consistent (Expectation C).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that The Markfield Institute of Higher Education is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The steps taken to ensure that external examiners' reports are discussed at course committee meetings (Expectation B7).

- The steps being taken to provide postgraduate research students with teaching opportunities to enhance their academic, personal and professional development (Expectation B11).
- The development of a more strategic approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities (Enhancement).

Theme: Student Employability

During the last review and redesign of its programmes in 2013, MIHE gave consideration to embedding key employability skills. It acknowledges that more attention could have been given to this important area, and in future the review and development of programmes will provide the opportunity for further work on this.

The Institute's approach to employability is focused on the enhancement of links with potential employers and industry, and the design of new courses that will open up students' career pathways.

The Institute has recently introduced an annual student engagement day and careers fair which is attended by external experts and practitioners from a number of relevant fields. External experts have also shared their knowledge with students through sessions delivered within the programmes, as well as through the Public Lecture Series. A visit to the Bank of England and Lloyds Insurance was organised last year and this was appreciated by students.

The Institute is progressing plans for the extension of its programme portfolio to include degrees with a greater employability focus. MIHE currently has no data on graduate destinations but participation in the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey is planned for 2016-17.

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The Markfield Institute of Higher Education has satisfactorily completed the financial sustainability, management and governance check.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

About The Markfield Institute of Higher Education

The Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE) was founded in 2000. It was established with a mission to contribute to the development of scholars in order to provide a deeper and more critical understanding of Islam in the modern contemporary context, to enable them to act as a bridge in developing understanding between Islam and the secular world, and also to make positive contributions in addressing problems (social, economic and educational) faced by contemporary societies. To realise this mission, MIHE's objective is to become a world-class higher education and research centre specialising in the pursuit of Islamic disciplines and to combine traditional Islamic scholarship with the best of Western research techniques, academic rigor and critical inquiry.

The Institute currently has 126 enrolled students (104 full-time and 22 part-time). There are currently four full-time and four part-time academic staff, and three full-time and three part-time administrative staff. MIHE currently offers the following academic programmes:

- BA Islamic Studies
- MA Islamic Banking, Finance and Management
- MEd Islamic Education
- MA Islamic Studies
- MPhil/PhD

The Institute's programmes were previously validated by the University of Gloucestershire, but the partnership was terminated in February 2013 (although it was agreed that the arrangements would continue until students already enrolled on a programme had completed their studies). A new partnership with Newman University for the validation of the taught programmes commenced in January 2014.

The University of Gloucestershire continues to validate the MPhil/PhD programmes as Newman University does not have research degree awarding powers. Under the agreement with the University no further recruitment is permitted to the MPhil/PhD programme, but the University has agreed to continue to support existing students until they complete their degrees. MIHE is now actively seeking a new partner to validate its MPhil/PhD programmes.

MIHE faces a number of challenges relating to recruitment to its target student numbers. Firstly, it has been adversely affected by the changes in the UK immigration regulations since 2012, which have impacted on the ability to recruit international students. MIHE specialises in Islamic disciplines and caters for a very niche student market. This poses a significant marketing challenge for MIHE. To respond to this challenge, the Institute's strategy is to focus efforts and resources in promoting programmes directly to Islamic seminaries, schools and mosques, where the interest for Islamic subjects is likely to be high, and also to review its academic offering in order to have courses that increase students' chances for future employment and hence are more attractive to prospective students. A further key challenge for MIHE is securing a new awarding body for the research degree programmes, as it is an important part of MIHE's educational strategy to have research students.

MIHE had a Review for Educational Oversight (REO) by QAA in 2012. The REO made several recommendations and also highlighted some good practice. Since that review, there has been a change in the Principal of the Institute. The new Principal instituted a review of the Institute's academic offering, quality assurance processes and the five-year strategic plan of the Institute. The majority of the recommendations from the REO have been fully and effectively addressed, and identified good practice has been further built on. One desirable recommendation related to gathering and evaluating feedback on the overall student experience. The Institute acknowledges that some further work needs to be done in this area, as strategies applied so far have had limited impact because of low response rates. There was also a desirable recommendation in the REO concerning public information sign-off processes. The current review team notes that, although there is an effective process for approval of public information, it is not yet fully documented, a finding which leads to a recommendation in this report.

Explanation of the findings about The Markfield Institute of Higher Education

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.1 The programmes delivered by MIHE under the agreements with its awarding bodies are validated programmes, designed by MIHE and approved by the respective universities. Newman University has (as did the University of Gloucestershire previously) responsibility for approving all the taught programmes according to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and Subject Benchmark Statements through its internal approval processes. MIHE is responsible for programme design and for the development of draft programme specifications, effective learning materials, and a learning and teaching strategy that meets the learning outcomes of each programme. Relevant national reference points are used to secure academic standards.

1.2 The Institute's adherence to the approval procedures and regulatory frameworks of the awarding bodies would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.3 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing a range of documents (including contractual and other documentation, the extensive documentation submitted for programme approval, programme approval reports, external examiner reports and internal meeting minutes). The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

1.4 Programme specifications and other documentation presented and approved as part of the validation process demonstrate that the qualifications are positioned at the appropriate level of the FHEQ, programme learning outcomes align with the relevant FHEQ qualifications descriptors, the qualifications awarded mark the achievement of positively defined learning outcomes and programme design takes account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and QAA guidance on qualification characteristics. Credit values are aligned with the Higher Education Credit Framework for England. The Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy and the programme-specific learning and teaching strategies provide for and prescribe a learning environment that enables students to achieve programme learning outcomes. External examiners confirm that standards are consistent with the FHEQ and align with relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

1.5 The review team examined a documentation trail relating to the validation of the BA Islamic Studies in 2012. This provided evidence of internal consultation on the proposal and of the full engagement of tutors with the design process, from discussion of the initial course outline document through to consideration of the final validation submission document, including the detail of curriculum design; programme learning outcomes; the proposed curriculum map; appropriate allocation of FHEQ levels to modules; module credit value; and module content. The validation document addresses all these matters in considerable detail, and provides confirmation that teaching and learning is designed to enable students' successful progression through their programme, building on and extending their knowledge and skills at each level. The more recent validation submissions to Newman University are equally comprehensive, detailed and extensive. It was evident from meetings with staff during the review that they had engaged fully with the programme design progress and had an understanding of Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ, and of their use in securing academic standards.

1.6 The awarding bodies have ultimate responsibility for ensuring adherence to the relevant external reference points through their regulatory frameworks. The evidence shows that relevant national reference points are used to secure academic standards and that MIHE effectively discharges its responsibilities within its partnership agreements. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.7 Ultimate responsibility for academic standards rests with the awarding bodies. The awarding bodies' academic frameworks and regulations apply to the programmes, determining academic standards and (where applicable) the award of credit. The awarding bodies apply their academic regulatory frameworks to secure the standards of their respective awards through programme design and monitoring and review processes; and MIHE is required to adhere to, and operate within, these frameworks.

1.8 The Principal, who is also Head of Quality, holds ultimate responsibility for the academic standards and quality of the programmes. The Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook sets out the academic quality committee structure, practices and procedures. Responsibility for managing and maintaining academic standards rests with Academic Board, which was established this academic year as the Institute's senior academic authority to ensure institutional oversight. Academic Board is chaired by the Principal and reports to the Management Board. It replaces the previous Course Board and later Partnership Board, which performed academic oversight functions and which, as joint boards with the University of Gloucestershire, were chaired by the University of Gloucestershire Link Tutor. A number of academic committees address academic quality and standards matters within their discrete areas of operation: Admissions (and accreditation of prior learning or prior experiential learning - APL/APEL) Appeals Committee; Research Committee; Course Committees; Staff-student consultative Committee; and examination and awards boards.

1.9 Annual Strategic Partnership meetings, chaired by a member of the University's senior management team, provide the forum for joint Newman University/MIHE reflection on the operation of the taught programmes, including consideration of annual programme reports, external examiner reports and external review reports, as well as discussion of broader strategic matters.

1.10 The Institute's arrangements, including its internal academic governance framework (established to ensure adherence to the respective universities' academic frameworks and regulations and to manage and maintain academic standards effectively), would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.11 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing the effectiveness of the Institute's academic governance arrangements, practices and procedures through scrutiny of contractual and other documentation, including the MIHE Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook and internal meeting minutes. The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

1.12 MIHE has effective arrangements for adhering to, and operating within, the academic regulatory frameworks of the awarding bodies. There are clear terms of reference for Academic Board. These define the specific elements of the Board's responsibility for oversight of the quality and standards of research, scholarship, academic courses, learning and teaching, and learning resources. Responsibility for institutional oversight of academic

standards is discharged effectively by Academic Board (and was formerly discharged effectively by the Partnership Board), principally through scrutiny and monitoring of annual programme monitoring reports, reports on postgraduate research student provision, link tutor reports and external examiner reports. While the extent of the associated discussion recorded in some of the (earlier) Partnership Board minutes was variable, the review team found that the Academic Board minutes provide a fuller and useful account of the discussion, including review of individual modules and consideration of student recruitment, progression and attainment data.

1.13 However, while the Institute's academic committees beneath Academic Board level have clearly defined terms of reference, and Academic Board has itself determined that it will receive reports and evaluate the work of these committees, the formal reporting lines for the Institution's higher education deliberative structures are currently unclear. The review team **recommends** that MIHE establishes and clearly documents formal reporting lines for the higher education deliberative structures.

1.14 MIHE implements academic governance arrangements, practices and procedures that meet its obligations to its awarding partners. MIHE operates within the context of its partnership agreements and the academic frameworks and regulations for which the awarding partners are responsible. The Expectation is met. The associated risk is low, as the recommendation relates to the completion of activity already underway that will allow MIHE to meet the Expectation more fully.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.15 The Institute's awarding bodies are responsible for the final approval of definitive programme information, including programme specifications. MIHE is responsible for preparing programme information for validation and for making it available to students after it has been approved by the validating university. University validation and review processes include scrutiny of programme and module specifications, as well as definitive programme information contained in course handbooks.

1.16 The arrangements in place for the maintenance and use of definitive programme records would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.17 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of a range of documentation including programme and module specifications, course handbooks, internal meeting minutes and the MIHE virtual learning environment (VLE). The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff, including awarding body representatives.

1.18 Programme specifications for the taught programmes, designed by MIHE and approved through the validation process, specify the level on the FHEQ at which each qualification is located, and set out programme structures consistent with the Higher Education Credit Framework for England. Learning, teaching and assessment strategies articulate learning opportunities that enable students to demonstrate the learning outcomes. Programme and module specifications provide a formal record of indicative content and structure, constituent parts and intended learning outcomes. The Research Degrees Handbook, which is accessible on the VLE, provides appropriate definitive programme information for staff and students.

1.19 Definitive course information, including programme specifications and course handbooks (which include module specifications), are accessible to staff and students on the VLE. Students confirmed that programme information is set out clearly in handbooks, and that they refer to this information frequently. Staff whom the review team met had engaged with programme design processes including discussion of FHEQ levels and subject benchmarking, and the production of draft programme specifications. Effective staff engagement with these processes was also shown in the documentation.

1.20 Generally, staff and student comment in meetings with the review team, together with the available documentation, provided evidence that definitive programme records are used effectively as a reference point for delivery and quality assurance of the programmes, the details of which are discussed in the other sections of this report.

1.21 Although the review team found that these arrangements generally operate satisfactorily, the approved programme specification for the BA Islamic Studies states that entrants are required to have achieved GCSE Maths at grades A-C, but the Institute no longer requires this in practice. These arrangements had not been formally approved by Newman University, and this led to the recommendation in Expectation A3.1.

1.22 Overall, the definitive records of programmes provide a secure reference point and are used effectively by staff. MIHE generally fulfils its responsibilities for maintaining definitive records within its partnership agreements. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.23 The Institute is approved to deliver programmes by its awarding bodies, who are responsible for the setting and approving of academic standards. New course proposals are considered at a strategic level at Academic Board, to ensure that they fit with the Institution's strategic plan. All new course proposals are scrutinised and approved by Newman University before proceeding to the formal validation process.

1.24 The oversight provided by these systems enables MIHE to ensure that academic standards are set at the appropriate level. MIHE, through the arrangements operated with its awarding bodies (including annual partnership meetings, the involvement of link tutors and the newly formed academic board), has an appropriate framework for the approval of programmes.

1.25 These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.26 The Expectation was tested through scrutiny of a range of documentation, including external examiner reports and annual monitoring reports. The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

1.27 MIHE has in place processes for programme approval that work appropriately and comply with the academic frameworks and regulations of its awarding bodies. MIHE's Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook contains details of validation and quality assurance processes. During the review visit MIHE presented evidence of this process in action for the BA Islamic Studies. This programme was developed and approved during 2010-11 and validated by the University of Gloucestershire. This development made extensive use of external stakeholder input and appropriate use of Subject Benchmark Statements. A new MA Islam and International Development is under development and as part of this process the Institute has consulted with a number of stakeholders. The review team was told that because there is not a single relevant Subject Benchmark Statement for Islamic Studies, the Institute develops its programmes with reference to a broad range of related benchmarks. The extensive use of related subject benchmarks and externality, which informs programme development, is **good practice**.

1.28 The review team found that, although the approved programme specification for the BA Islamic Studies states that entrants are required to have achieved GCSE Maths at grades A-C, the Institute no longer requires this in practice. While the Newman University representative whom the review team met confirmed that the University would be content with this amendment to the entry requirements, the Institute had not sought the University's formal approval of this change, nor of the consequential amendment to the definitive programme information. The review team **recommends** that the Institute ensures all modifications to programmes are approved through Newman University processes.

1.29 The review team found that the Institute operates within the frameworks of its awarding bodies and has appropriate procedures and policies in place for the approval of

programmes, to ensure that they meet UK threshold standards and the standards of the awarding bodies. The Expectation is met. The associated level of risk is moderate because the recommendation relates to a weakness in the operation of part of the Institute's governance arrangements.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.30 External examiners, who are appointed by Newman University, ensure that student achievement is measured by the achievement of learning outcomes at the appropriate level. External examiners attend examination boards at both module and award level and the issues raised in their reports are developed into an action plan that feeds into annual monitoring reports, which in turn goes to the newly developed Academic Board and Newman University. MIHE has developed a Strategy for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (SELTA), which has assessment as one of the five key themes.

1.31 MIHE has an Assessment Handbook which sets out all the assessment principles and publishes performance (grade) descriptors for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Programme Specifications set out the assessment strategies that enable students to achieve module and programme-level learning outcomes.

1.32 The responsibilities checklist sets out the responsibilities for assessment between MIHE and Newman University, as well as MIHE staff responsibilities for engagement with assessment processes, through first marking of student work and second marking or moderation. The Student Handbook sets out the assessment principles and the Course Handbooks provide a mapping of learning outcomes to assessment. MIHE monitors student achievement through course committees and examination boards that will report to the new Academic Board.

1.33 The systems and approaches in place to ensure the appropriate design and monitoring of assessment, and that credit and qualifications are awarded appropriately, would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.34 The Expectation was tested through scrutiny of a range of documentation, including external examiner reports and annual monitoring reports. The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

1.35 MIHE is currently operating two assessment board systems for its two awarding bodies. For the University of Gloucestershire, decisions on students' achievements and awards are made at examination boards that have University representatives present. For Newman University, decisions initially made at MIHE examination boards are subsequently submitted to Newman University examination boards for approval. External examiners are involved in examination boards and confirm the security of the decisions made. The awarding bodies' processes are outlined in the MIHE Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook. MIHE staff attend examination boards, which monitor student achievement against required standards.

1.36 Assessment briefs are produced through a peer review process, with academic staff reviewing each other's assessment briefs against a set template and making suggestions for improvement. Once this process has taken place all assessment briefs are sent to the external examiners for approval. The course handbooks set out details of the assessment strategy and include mapping of all course module assessments against learning outcomes; the module handbooks provide details of the assessment briefs. Students confirmed that staff discuss assessment requirements in formal class sessions and that they have a good understanding of assessment requirements and criteria.

1.37 The review team concludes that programme assessment arrangements are well defined and carefully verified and monitored. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.38 Newman University is responsible for overall monitoring and review of the taught programmes, including periodic review. MIHE and Newman University have appropriate structures in place for monitoring and review, including regular liaison with the University link tutor and Annual Strategic Partnership meetings. The newly formed Academic Board will take the lead responsibility for all quality and academic standards issues including monitoring and review.

1.39 The appropriateness of academic standards is addressed through full engagement with external examiners and their reports. MIHE operates an annual monitoring process for all courses. Annual monitoring reports follow the Newman University template. Data considered in the production of the annual monitoring report includes module reports, student module evaluations, course committee minutes, student achievements and retention data.

1.40 The arrangements in place for annual monitoring and review would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.41 The review team tested this Expectation through scrutiny of a range of documentation, including external examiner reports and annual monitoring reports. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

1.42 Periodic institutional review by the awarding bodies normally takes place every five years. The last was undertaken by the University of Gloucestershire in 2013 and this had successful outcomes. Following the change of awarding body for the taught provision in 2014 there is now an Annual Partnership meeting with Newman University, at which the operation of the partnership is reviewed and any necessary actions are identified.

1.43 In May 2015 MIHE put forward minor amendments to modules across its suite of academic programmes for approval by Newman University. MIHE completed all the necessary paperwork on time and to the required standard and a significant number of changes were successfully approved.

1.44 The review team concludes that the Institute works with its awarding bodies to operate monitoring and review processes that address whether threshold academic standards, and the academic standards required by the awarding bodies, are maintained. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.45 MIHE makes use of external examiners and independent expertise at all key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards. External examiners are appointed by the awarding bodies. The Institute has recently started to consider their reports at Course Committees and the new Academic Board. MIHE makes use of employers in a number of formal and informal ways, including formally in the development of new programmes or the revalidation of existing programmes. Employers are involved in supporting the delivery of programmes and attend Student Engagement Days (annual events for students). MIHE has an Advisory Board made up of national and international academics who provide guidance and advice on future direction.

1.46 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.47 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of a range of documentation. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

1.48 External examiner reports show that MIHE is able to assure itself that UK standards are being met. External examiner reports are considered as part of the annual monitoring process, and external examiners verify the outcomes of examination boards and confirm that MIHE is meeting the required academic standards.

1.49 MIHE engages with stakeholders, employers and students in the development of programmes, as highlighted by the development in 2010-11 of the BA Islamic Studies and the current development of the MA Islam and International Development. The approval procedures of awarding bodies include the requirement to involve independent external academic advisers in the validation process. External academic advisers are asked to scrutinise programmes to confirm alignment with external frameworks.

1.50 The review team concludes that the Institute's participation in the quality assurance processes and procedures of its awarding bodies ensures that independent external expertise is used in the approval of programmes and in the ongoing maintenance of academic standards. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies: Summary of findings

1.51 In reaching its judgement about academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.52 The Institute's main responsibilities for maintaining academic standards involve adhering to the policies and processes of its awarding partners, which it generally does effectively. All Expectations in this judgement area are met. The associated level of risk is low in six out of seven cases. In Expectation A3.1, the level of risk is moderate because the review team identified an issue in this area which relates to weakness in the operation of part of the Institute's governance arrangements.

1.53 The review team makes two recommendations, associated with Expectations A2.1 and A3.1 respectively, that the Institute should establish and clearly document formal reporting lines for the higher education deliberative structures; and that the Institute should ensure that all modifications to programmes are approved through Newman University's processes.

1.54 There are no affirmations in this area. There is one feature of good practice relating to Expectation A3.1, concerning the extensive use of related subject benchmarks and externality, which informs programme development.

1.55 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by the Institute on behalf of its awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval

Findings

2.1 MIHE has a strategic approach to the development of its programmes which is set out in the Strategic Plan. Proposals for the development of new programmes are considered internally firstly, and this process includes analysis of annual monitoring outcomes, staff and student views and an analysis of job opportunities and industry trends. Following this, proposals are then sent to Newman University for consideration.

2.2 Following approval from the University to move to the programme development phase, programme and module specifications are developed using the University's templates. A draft of the validation document is then discussed with the University and feedback incorporated into the final document before it goes forward to the University for validation.

2.3 MIHE engages with stakeholders, employers and students in the development of new programmes. MIHE receives approval from the validating University through following the validating University formal validation procedures. These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.4 The Expectation was tested through scrutiny of a range of documentation. The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

2.5 The most recent new programme to go through the whole process was in 2010-11. This was the BA Islamic Studies, which went through a thorough process of curricula design, development and approval. The process included engaging with 29 external stakeholders and gaining the views of two external experts at other UK higher education institutions. In 2015-16 MIHE is developing a new master's programme in Islam and International Development and has engaged with employers in the development of this programme. The new master's programme has been approved to go forward for development by Newman University and MIHE has engaged with a number of employers in its development, as reported to Academic Board.

2.6 MIHE has not previously formally engaged with students in the design and development of the curriculum but is formally and directly involving students in the development of the new master's programme.

2.7 The review team concludes that MIHE's procedures for programme design, development and approval are working effectively. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*

Findings

2.8 MIHE is responsible for student recruitment and admissions to the undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. MIHE is also responsible for decisions on admission to the pre-registration stage of the postgraduate research degree programmes but the University of Gloucestershire retains responsibility for the final approval of research degree proposals at the end of this stage.

2.9 MIHE does not currently participate in The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and all applications are made directly. Plans to apply to join UCAS have been approved by the Management Board but not yet progressed, pending Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) approval of student loans. The awarding bodies maintain records of students recruited, and retain oversight to ensure that students have the required entry qualifications and that AP(E)L is being awarded appropriately.

2.10 The MIHE Admissions policy clearly sets out roles and responsibilities and articulates the core general principles: inclusivity, non-discrimination and widening participation; fair, transparent and consistent process; and the recruitment of students with the potential to complete their award successfully. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that only appropriately qualified, trained and experienced academic staff undertake selection procedures.

2.11 The Admission Committee, and the AP(E)L Committee where relevant, is responsible for examining applications and making decisions on all admissions to the undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes. The MIHE Research Degrees Committee makes decisions on student enrolment to the pre-registration stage of the postgraduate research degree programme. The central Admissions Office is responsible for all administrative processes, and compliance with the UK Visas and Immigration points-based system in the issuing of CAS documents to international applicants, logging of relevant data and ensuring that only genuine students are admitted.

2.12 There are detailed and well documented admissions processes and a clear procedure for unsuccessful applicants to make complaints against admission decisions, including a right of appeal against initial decisions. The Institute's processes for considering and making decisions on AP(E)L applications are set out fully in the Admission Policy.

2.13 The Institute's arrangements for the recruitment, selection and admission of students would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.14 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of a range of documentation, including admissions policies and procedures, external examiner reports, the Research Degrees Handbook, and minutes of internal meetings. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

2.15 Overall, the review team found MIHE's recruitment, selection and admission procedures to be effective in practice. Admissions information (including the Admissions Policy, AP(E)L Guidelines, the application process and forms, course and fees information, open days, processes for unsuccessful applicants to obtain feedback, and admissions complaints processes) is generally set out fully and clearly on the Institute's website. However, website and printed information concerning the entry requirements for the BA Islamic Studies programme was inconsistent, raising a risk of confusion for applicants and staff. The programme specification provides the definitive entry requirements, stating that students will be expected to achieve 240 UCAS points (or equivalent) and at least GCSE English and Maths, Grade C (or equivalent). The review team found that the MIHE external website admissions pages specify 260 UCAS points (or equivalent), with no mention of GCSE English or Maths. The online and printed course brochure specify a minimum requirement of 2 A-levels and GCSE in English grades A-C (or equivalent) with no mention of Maths. The review team made a recommendation concerning the completeness and consistency of published information (see paragraph 3.14).

2.16 As noted in paragraph 1.28, the review team heard from MIHE senior staff that the Institute no longer applies the requirement for GCSE Maths (or equivalent) for entry to the BA Islamic Studies programme and that this change had not been formally approved by Newman University. The review team made a recommendation that the Institute ensures that all modifications to programmes are approved by Newman University (see paragraph 1.28).

2.17 Applicants wishing to register for postgraduate taught degree programmes must normally have at least a second class honours degree or equivalent. Non EEA students are required to demonstrate an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of at least 5.5 or equivalent. In the light of external examiner comment concerning the poor standards of written English of some MA students (also noted in the Newman University programme validation report), the review team **recommends** that the Institute amends the English language requirement for overseas entrants to the postgraduate taught programmes to ensure that students are adequately prepared for their programme.

2.18 Students whom the review team met said that the information they had accessed before entry was helpful and assisted them in making the decision to study at MIHE. Admissions processes are clear and work smoothly. Students and staff confirmed that all international students are interviewed, either face to face or by voice over internet protocol, and UK and EU students are interviewed if any aspect of their application needs to be explored further.

2.19 The Admissions Committee considers all undergraduate and postgraduate taught applications, scrutinises each applicant's qualifications, tracks progress where further information or documents are required, determines whether an interview is needed, considers any disability support needs declared on application, and makes the final admissions decisions. AP(E)L applications are considered in the first instance by the course leader and subsequently by the Admission Committee sitting as an AP(E)L Committee, which takes the final decision. Internal meeting minutes, an audit trail showing the operation of the AP(E)L process, and staff comment to the review team provided clear evidence that the processes, including the processes for identifying the support needs of students with a disability, are implemented fully and effectively. Key MIHE staff involved in admissions have attended training at Newman University.

2.20 Overall, the Institute effectively implements fair, transparent and inclusive procedures for the recruitment, selection and admission of students. The review team made one recommendation, to amend the English language requirement for overseas entrants to the postgraduate taught programmes. The review team concludes that the Expectation is

met. The level of risk is moderate because the recommendation relates to an issue which in turn relates to a small part of the Institute's provision.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.21 The strategic approach to learning and teaching is articulated in the Strategy for Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (SELTA). The SELTA establishes core principles, including creative and engaging teaching in a stimulating and supportive environment; learning opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, skills and values; and professional development opportunities for academic and support staff. The SELTA Implementation Plan 2012-2016, incorporated within the Strategy, sets out priority strategic objectives, including student-centred, active learning and technology-enhanced learning.

2.22 MIHE is responsible for the selection of teaching staff (following verification of the suitability of their qualifications, skills and experience) for approval by the awarding bodies through review of CVs. Internal processes are set out in considerable detail in the Staff Recruitment Policy.

2.23 Staff teaching on the University of Gloucestershire and Newman University programmes were approved at validation. Under the University of Gloucestershire collaborative agreement, MIHE is required to submit to the University the CVs of subsequent appointees, and the University reserves the right to refuse appointment at its absolute discretion. Newman University requires staff involved in delivery and support to be suitably qualified and to have the skills and experience appropriate to the programme.

2.24 MIHE has in place mechanisms for monitoring and maintaining teaching quality, comprising annual peer review of teaching, annual staff appraisal, support for new staff and student feedback.

2.25 The Staff Development and Training Plan 2015-2016 sets out staff development objectives developed in the light of institutional objectives and staff appraisals, together with an in-house training schedule for the current year.

2.26 This academic year, the Institute has established the post of Teaching and Learning Coordinator, whose role comprises the identification, support and dissemination of effective practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment, and advising the Academic Board on learning and teaching strategy, policy and associated action planning.

2.27 The Institute's arrangements for ensuring the effectiveness of its strategic approach to the provision and enhancement of students' learning opportunities would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.28 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of a range of documentation. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

2.29 Newly appointed staff receive a useful induction on joining the Institute, and are supported by a mentor. Teaching and administrative staff attend staff development events at

Newman University. Teaching staff have access to the Newman University Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education programme, which is compulsory for staff new to higher education teaching, and so far one member of MIHE staff has completed this programme. Internal staff development is well attended by academic and administrative staff and over the past year has covered assessment, the role of external examiners and the annual quality cycle, and has included a series of sessions on the Quality Code. Staff are encouraged and financially supported to attend external conferences. The Institute has set targets for membership of the Higher Education Academy; two members of staff have already achieved fellowship status and two others are about to complete this. All teaching staff are research active.

2.30 The staff appraisal and peer review processes are implemented effectively. Annual appraisal reports for teaching and administrative staff are comprehensive and detailed. They provide self-evaluation by the appraisee; review of the previous year's activity and achievements; and objectives and identified staff development for the coming year. Peer review reports, while somewhat less detailed in some cases, provide evidence of reflection on the design and planning of learning activities, teaching methodology to support student learning and sharing good practice.

2.31 The Teaching and Learning Coordinator, appointed recently, has introduced enhancements to the Institute's peer review activity. Annual internal peer reviews are now supplemented by peer review conducted by an external academic with wide expertise in relevant subject discipline areas, as well as in learning and teaching in higher education. This innovation, which is clearly valued by staff, makes a significant contribution to their professional practice and to the development of learning and teaching.

2.32 The use of externality in the MIHE internal peer review process, which makes a significant contribution to the development of learning and teaching, is **good practice**.

2.33 The Institute is addressing the recognised challenges presented by the development of the VLE as an effective learning tool, in particular the integration of online material into a coherent design for all modules and programmes. A VLE Steering Group, established in 2013, formulated a plan for VLE development, leading to the implementation of upgrades and the introduction of minimum expectations for content, including module handbooks with weekly schedules, reading lists, assessment briefs, presentation slides and other teaching material, and facilities for online submission of assessments. Course leaders and the Principal regularly monitor the VLE to ensure compliance with these requirements. When the VLE was upgraded, MIHE staff attended relevant training at the University of Gloucestershire.

2.34 Currently, the VLE provides students with extensive module and programme information and learning materials, including programme specifications, module handbooks, timetables, reading lists, lecture notes and presentation slides. Students confirmed that handbooks and the VLE provide them with useful information specifying the learning opportunities and support available to them and setting out what is expected of them with regard to their engagement with learning.

2.35 Student feedback on their learning experience is gathered via mid-module and end-of-module evaluation, and course committee and staff-student consultative meetings. Annual module and programme monitoring reports demonstrate, and students confirm, staff responsiveness to student feedback on their learning opportunities, such as the provision of additional module support material and the extension of class contact time. In particular, the Institute has taken effective action to address students' requests for more class debate and discussion and the review team heard from students that they value the varied learning

activities provided in classes, to promote their engagement and enhance their communication skills.

2.36 Learning and teaching intentions are strategically articulated. Overall, the Institute keeps its learning opportunities and teaching practices under systematic review and development and the enhancement of students' learning opportunities is supported by staff appraisal, peer review and staff development. Students confirm their satisfaction with learning and teaching and that the VLE enables their learning. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.37 MIHE is responsible for student support and learning resources for the programmes. The Strategy for Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (SELTA) sets out, as core principles, the effective use of resources and the provision of student support systems and learning opportunities that provide a stimulating and supportive environment, responding flexibly to learners' needs and aspirations and enhancing student retention and progression. The Institute's commitment to equality and diversity is expressed in the Admissions Policy and Student Charter and reiterated at student induction: all ages, races and lifestyles are welcomed.

2.38 The Institute has clear policies, procedures and arrangements to provide appropriate resources for the programmes and to support students, including induction, personal and academic support and support for students with disabilities. The Institute's arrangements and resources to enable student development and achievement would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.39 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of a range of documents. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

2.40 The evidence demonstrates the arrangements to be effective in practice. Students whom the review team met were content with their induction. This takes place over one day and covers key information, including VLE access to the student handbook and the full MIHE assessment regulations; the assessment process, extensions, mitigating circumstances, feedback, and plagiarism; complaints and appeals procedures; attendance policy; and student representation. In MIHE surveys some students have suggested that induction could be more in depth. The Institute has acknowledged this as an area for further enhancement and is taking steps to address it.

2.41 The review team heard from students that personal tutors are allocated to them at the beginning of the programme and that they are well supported academically and pastorally, with ready access to tutors and course leaders.

2.42 As noted in paragraph 2.17, in 2014 the Newman University programme validation report noted external examiner comment on the need to address students' written English language skills. In response to these concerns, the Institute extended its optional Academic Writing programme, which is available to all students and which comprises a series of sessions beginning with study skills and covering a range of academic skills, including essay writing, presentations, critical review, referencing and dissertations. The same external examiner has reported more recently that, generally, the standard of students' written English was better than in the previous year. However, in the light of these matters, the review team made a recommendation under Expectation B2 that the Institute amends the English language entry requirements for overseas entrants to the postgraduate taught programmes.

2.43 MIHE follows Newman University's policy on equal opportunity and support provision for students with a disability. If declared on application, the disability is discussed at the Admissions Committee. Students may be interviewed to discuss the level of support

that they may need. Reasonable adjustments, incorporated into individual learning plans copied to course leaders and all tutors, cover teaching, learning, resources and assessment. These arrangements are working well, as was shown by case studies articulated in the review team's meeting with teaching and professional support staff.

2.44 The MIHE library service is responsible for providing a high quality resource base to support teaching, learning and research, and for managing resources efficiently, effectively and economically. Students have access to a well stocked library, to an extensive online external resource package to which the Institute subscribes, and to the British Library inter-library loan service. Students are generally satisfied with library and associated provision and requests for more copies of core texts have been addressed.

2.45 Student survey feedback describes the existing IT infrastructure and support services, as 'adequate' to support study and preparation for assignments. Students whom the review team met referred to problems with wireless access. The Institute has recognised the need to improve its IT infrastructure, notably wireless access, and following investigation by an external contractor work on improvements is to begin shortly.

2.46 Student support, staffing and physical resource provision are effectively scrutinised, monitored and reviewed through programme validation, annual programme monitoring and programme review.

2.47 There are effective systems and processes for the provision, monitoring and evaluation of arrangements and resources that support student development and achievement. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.48 MIHE has a Student Charter that sets out its expectations of students and what students can expect from the institute, which is available on the website and on the VLE. The Student Engagement Policy sets out the formal mechanisms for student engagement, including mid and end-of-module reviews; student surveys; student representatives; Course Committees; Staff Student Consultative Meetings; and Academic Board, which has student representation. The information arising from these engagement mechanisms is acted upon in the development of the annual monitoring reports for each programme, which are scrutinised by academic board.

2.49 The arrangements in place for student engagement would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.50 The Expectation was tested by scrutiny of a range of documentation. The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

2.51 Students indicated that the process of student engagement is working effectively in practice and that each course has student representatives who receive induction for the role from the Principal. MIHE publishes responses to issues raised by students raised at Course Committees or Staff Student Consultative Meetings via minutes that are put on the VLE site. Information on the VLE also includes the Student Engagement Policy, the Student Charter and dates of the Course Committees and Staff Student Consultative Meetings.

2.52 Issues raised by students through Course Committees and Staff Student Consultative Committees (including problems with the wireless signal, library opening hours, lack of social activity and space and employability issues) have all been effectively addressed. MIHE has extended library opening hours to meet student demand and is investing in a programme of upgrading wireless access across the campus in response to student requests. Students confirmed that staff are accessible and operate an open door policy, and are responsive to dealing with issues that they raise. MIHE hosts a Student Engagement day when external speakers and employers come into the Institute, which is positively received by students.

2.53 The review team found that the Institute has created a culture that encourages significant student involvement in the opportunities provided for formal student representation, particularly in terms of the high levels of student attendance at meetings. The culture engendered by the Institute for capturing the student voice, which leads to a high level of engagement in formal committees, is **good practice**.

2.54 The review team concludes that the Institute has in place a range of mechanisms for gaining student feedback, and that it is responsive to the feedback it receives. There are appropriate mechanisms in place for student representation and student membership of formal committees, and students are highly engaged with these mechanisms. The Expectation is met and the associated risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning

Findings

2.55 MIHE has responsibility for setting assessments (to be approved by the University), for first marking, moderation or second marking, and for giving feedback to students. MIHE has an Assessment Handbook that sets out in full the procedures to be followed in relation to assessment, including a link to Newman University regulations.

2.56 MIHE has a strategic approach to assessment, as laid down in the Strategy for Enhancement of Learning Teaching and Assessment (SELTA). Course assessment strategies are laid down in the Course Handbooks and align with the SELTA, which refers to awareness of the appropriate FHEQ levels and qualifications and descriptors mapping of assessments to learning outcomes.

2.57 The Assessment Handbook is published for students on the VLE. As explained in paragraph 1.36, MIHE has a process for the approval of assessments using a peer review process, and makes use of an Assessment Briefing Template as part of this process. All assessments approved through the internal process are then sent to the external examiner for final sign off.

2.58 These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.59 The Expectation was tested by scrutiny of a range of documentation provided by MIHE. The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

2.60 MIHE deals with AP(E)L with University oversight. Details of the AP(E)L process are in section 2.8 of the Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook and are published on the VLE along with the APL Policy and Applicants Guide and the APL Forms. The AP(E)L process is contained in the Admissions flowchart and is dealt with by Course Leaders.

2.61 The processes for assessing students are working well in practice. Assessment information is contained in the Student Handbooks and Module Handbooks and students confirmed that assessments and assessment criteria are clearly explained to them. Tutors are accessible and provide significant support in relation to assessments, which are now both submitted and marked online. External examiners have confirmed their satisfaction with the assessment process.

2.62 The review team concludes that MIHE has developed and embedded sound assessment processes which operate with oversight by the awarding partners. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.63 External examiners for taught programmes are appointed by Newman University. All external examiners are provided with an induction and Handbook by Newman University and external examiner reports are written using the Newman template and are received by the University Academic Board, which has been established recently, receives external examiner reports and responses to them that are written by Course Leaders. MIHE makes suggestions for external examiners for research degree students and these are forwarded to the University of Gloucestershire for approval.

2.64 The arrangements for appointing external examiners, and the processes in place to ensure that their comments are considered and responded to, would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.65 The Expectation was tested by looking at the range of documentation provided by MIHE. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

2.66 External examiner reports are responded to effectively via the development of an action plan by Course Leaders that is included in the annual monitoring report. All external examiner reports and responses go to the newly formed Academic Board. The Principal reviews all external examiner reports and looks for examples of good practice or issues which require action. External examiner reports confirm that standards and levels of attainment are comparable with other UK providers and that appropriate standards are being met.

2.67 The names of external examiners are published to students in course/module handbooks and their reports are available on the VLE for students to read. With effect from May 2015 MIHE started tabling external examiner reports at Course Committees so that they can be discussed with students. This is being implemented systematically across the institute and the review team **affirms** the steps taken to ensure that external examiners' reports are discussed at course committee meetings.

2.68 The review team concludes that appropriate use is made of external examiners. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.69 The process of programme monitoring and review is shared by MIHE and its awarding bodies. MIHE prepares documentation for periodic review by the awarding bodies.

2.70 MIHE is responsible for reviewing modules and programmes and for the production of annual monitoring reports, which are produced following reflection on mid and end-of-module evaluations; students' performance from examination and award boards; external examiners reports; and student recruitment, achievement, progression and retention data. These are presented to the Academic Board, where annual monitoring reports from all courses are reviewed holistically, and also submitted to the awarding bodies for discussion at partnership review meetings.

2.71 Periodic institutional review by the awarding bodies normally takes place every five years. The last was undertaken by the University of Gloucestershire in 2013 and this had successful outcomes. Following the change of awarding body for the taught provision in 2014 there is now an Annual Partnership meeting with Newman University at which the operation of the partnership is reviewed and any necessary actions are identified.

2.72 These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.73 The Expectation was tested through scrutiny of a range of documentation. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

2.74 There is an effective annual monitoring process, which includes consideration of the outcomes from mid and end-of-module reviews and external examiner reports. Annual monitoring reports are reviewed by the Academic Board and discussed in partnership meetings with the awarding bodies. The process for the periodic review of programmes has been successful, as shown by the 2013 University of Gloucestershire review. The Annual Partnership meeting with Newman University involves a thorough review of the partnership and the programmes, including discussion of programme annual reports and external examiner reports, staffing and staff development issues, good practice and future developments.

2.75 The review team concludes that MIHE operates a range of ongoing, annual and periodic review processes that feed into the formal oversight, approval and review mechanisms of its awarding bodies. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.76 MIHE has responsibility for initial consideration of complaints and appeals under its own procedures. Awarding bodies have responsibility for dealing with complaints and appeals if students remain dissatisfied after exhaustion of MIHE internal procedures. Students have a final right of appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

2.77 The complaints and appeals procedures are on the VLE, and in the Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook and the Student Handbook. The operation of complaints and appeals procedures will in the future be monitored by the newly formed Academic Board.

2.78 These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.79 The review of the Expectation was conducted by looking at the range of documentation provided by MIHE. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

2.80 MIHE tries to deal with all complaints raised by students through an informal process in the first instance. The formal process for dealing with complaints is articulated in the Student Handbook and in practice is clearly documented and recorded. MIHE maintains a log of complaints and appeals.

2.81 The review team found that some students were unclear about the differences between a formal complaint and an academic appeal. There are differences in the information on complaints and appeals published in the Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook (IGQAH) and the Student Handbook. The IGQAH refers to a Complaints and Grievance Committee that is concerned with student complaints about another student or a staff member. This information is not in the Student Handbook and the Complaints and Grievance Committee is not included on the MIHE Committee structure.

2.82 The documentation provided to the review team included some case studies of complaints and their handling. The review team considered that the complaints and appeals procedures operated effectively and that complaints had been handled appropriately, but noted that the written information provided on the procedures was contradictory and potentially confusing. This contributed to the recommendation in section C of the report, that MIHE should formally document and implement the processes for the approval of published information about higher education programmes and ensure that all information is complete and consistent.

2.83 The review team concludes that the Institute has appropriate procedures for dealing with student complaints and appeals which are fair, accessible and timely. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*

2.84 MIHE has no other organisations to whom it has delegated responsibilities, therefore this Expectation is not applicable.

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.85 Following its decision to terminate the relationship with the Institute, the University of Gloucestershire confirmed that current postgraduate research students and their supervisors would continue under the existing arrangements and regulations. However, should MIHE secure a new validating partner, the University of Gloucestershire has agreed that it would be the individual students' choice whether to continue under the University of Gloucestershire or the new partner. As is made clear on the MIHE website, admissions to the MPhil/PhD programme were suspended on termination of the current contract, but will be resumed should a new partner be found. Currently, there are 16 research students (15 PhD and 1 MPhil) on the programme.

2.86 Management responsibility for research degree provision rests with the Head of Research, who reports to the Principal and who is a member of the University Research Degrees Committee. The Research Degrees Committee, which is chaired by the Head of Research and comprises research active staff, is charged with ensuring that research quality is maintained and enhanced and with considering, planning and promoting the Institution's research strategy. It makes decisions on student enrolment to the pre-registration stage of the programme; considers applications for PhD registration before these are submitted to the University of Gloucestershire for approval; and approves first and second PhD supervisors and examiners (for final approval by the University of Gloucestershire). The Committee has responsibility for monitoring research students' progress and internally approving final research proposals before they are sent for confirmation to the University of Gloucestershire Research Degrees Committee. Administrative support is provided by the MIHE Research Office.

2.87 The authority to approve supervisors, examiners and examination arrangements, and to make final decisions on awards, appeals, research degree registrations (following the pre-registration period), temporary de-registration and transfers from MPhil to PhD, rests with the University of Gloucestershire.

2.88 The Research Degrees Handbook, which is aligned with the University of Gloucestershire Handbook of Regulations and Procedures, is available to students and staff. It sets out the research degrees regulations and procedures, covering enrolment and registration; supervisor qualifications, experience and training; supervision and supervision records; transfer from MPhil to PhD; examination; and teaching and demonstrating by postgraduate research students.

2.89 The regulations and arrangements in place to provide research degree students with the support they need to achieve successful outcomes from their research degrees would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.90 The review team tested the Expectation by examining contractual, policy and other documentation including the MIHE Research Degrees Handbook, the MIHE Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook, and annual institutional reports; research supervision and student data; training information; and internal meeting minutes. The review

team also tested the Expectation through meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

2.91 The documentary evidence, together with student and staff comment in meetings, confirm that the arrangements for the admission, supervision and examination of postgraduate research students are generally clear, robust and applied in accordance with the awarding University's, and the Institute's own internal, regulations and requirements.

2.92 PhD entrants, who must have a bachelor's degree with honours or a master's degree in a relevant discipline, together with an IELTS score of 7 for overseas students, normally enrol for an MPhil in the first instance.

2.93 Following submission of the postgraduate application form and a research proposal, current students were interviewed by the (then) Registrar with another member of the research team. The current process is that interviews are conducted by the Head of Research and the proposed supervisor(s). Final admissions decisions are taken by the MIHE Research Degrees Committee, based on the merits of the application and the availability of supervisory capacity and subject expertise.

2.94 A training needs analysis undertaken at the interview identifies any skills training needs. Candidates not already holding a master's degree including relevant advanced research methods training must normally complete two University of Gloucestershire research methods modules or equivalent modules offered at the Institute. Any other specific needs identified are addressed through the Institute's compulsory monthly research training seminars, to which University of Gloucestershire staff contribute.

2.95 Initially, students are enrolled on the pre-registration stage of the programme, during which they are guided by their supervisors in further developing their research proposals with a view to registration with the University of Gloucestershire as PhD students. Following initial approval by the MIHE Research Degrees Committee, registration applications are submitted for final approval by the University of Gloucestershire within 12 months of enrolment. While the students whom the review team met clearly understand the nature and purpose of the pre-registration period, the team found that these matters are not fully set out in formal documentation, leading to a recommendation concerning the completeness of published information in section C (see paragraph 3.14).

2.96 The supervisory team comprises one internal academic (the second may be external), with combined experience of supervising to successful completion at least two candidates for research degrees; for PhD candidates, at least one supervisor has successfully supervised at doctoral level. The one single instance to date of a supervisor leaving the Institute before the student had completed was dealt with swiftly and satisfactorily. Supervisors undertake training as required. Prior to approval by the University of Gloucestershire, staff new to supervision attend research supervisor training delivered jointly between the Institute and the University of Gloucestershire. Refresher training is provided by the MIHE and University of Gloucestershire Heads of Research.

2.97 Individual student progress is monitored in documented monthly supervision meetings and closely tracked in the monthly Research Degree Committee meetings. Joint annual progress reports completed by the student and supervisor summarise overall progress and identify action points for the coming year. Students and staff confirmed that identified training needs, in particular skills training, are addressed via the Institute's monthly research training seminars. An annual overview of postgraduate research provision and student progress, together with an action plan, is prepared by the Head of Research for presentation to the MIHE Research Degrees Committee and the University of Gloucestershire Research Degrees Committee.

2.98 Responsibility for the examination of postgraduate research students rests with the University of Gloucestershire, although MIHE nominates examiners for approval by the University and to date all nominations have been approved. The Institute provides students with support and guidance on preparing for examination, including mock vivas and training sessions on preparing the thesis for submission and preparing for the viva.

2.99 The Research Degrees Handbook specifies clear requirements and safeguards regarding teaching and demonstrating by postgraduate research students. It places precise limits on the extent of student engagement with these activities, including adequate preparation time, and prescribes appropriate training and proper remuneration. However, there are currently no research students teaching at the Institute. Students met by the review team said that teaching opportunities would considerably enhance their skills and experience. Staff recognise the benefits to students, and the Institute is to progress plans to introduce such opportunities. The review team **affirms** the steps being taken to provide postgraduate research students with teaching opportunities to enhance their academic, personal and professional development.

2.100 MIHE systems and arrangements aim to engender a research culture and community and are effective in creating an appropriate environment for postgraduate research students. The Institute's monthly research training seminars, which are compulsory for students, provide the opportunity for students to come together as a group, present their research, and hear presentations from other students, MIHE and University of Gloucestershire staff, and external academics. Students attend the University of Gloucestershire annual research conference and present papers, and attend external conferences, with MIHE financial support. The Institute is progressing plans to hold its own research conference this year, providing students with a further opportunity to present their research.

2.101 In confirming the continuation of the existing arrangements for current postgraduate students, the University of Gloucestershire noted the track record of successful and timely completion of MIHE students.

2.102 Overall, MIHE has an appropriate research environment providing secure academic standards and offering postgraduate research students the support they need to achieve successful outcomes from their research degrees. The review team made one affirmation, of the steps being taken to provide postgraduate research students with teaching opportunities, to enhance their academic, personal and professional development. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.103 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.104 All of the 10 applicable Expectations in this judgement area are met. Nine are judged to be of low risk and one (Expectation B2) of moderate risk.

2.105 There is one recommendation in this judgement area, in Expectation B2, relating to the need to amend the English language entry requirements for overseas applicants to the postgraduate taught programmes. The level of risk associated with this Expectation is moderate because the issue relates to a small part of the Institute's provision.

2.106 There are two affirmations in this judgement area, in Expectation B7 and B11 respectively, relating to the steps taken to ensure that external examiners' reports are discussed at course committee meetings, and the steps being taken to provide postgraduate research students with teaching opportunities to enhance their academic, personal and professional development.

2.107 The review team concludes that the quality of learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The agreements with the respective awarding bodies require university approval of proposed publicity marketing material before publication. Newman University has responsibility for the final approval of definitive programme information, including programme specifications, as did the University of Gloucestershire previously. MIHE is responsible for preparing and making available to students programme information after it has been approved by the validating university.

3.2 The respective awarding bodies are responsible for issuing student transcripts and award certificates.

3.3 Within the Institute, all public information, including information to be published externally (marketing and promotional material, including website information) and internally (such as student handbooks) is produced by the relevant staff, checked for accuracy, consistency and completeness by a nominated person, then checked and signed off by the Principal (for financial, corporate and marketing material) and course leaders (for course-related information such as handbooks, the prospectus, course brochures).

3.4 These arrangements would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.5 The review team tested the Expectation through examination of publicly available online information and printed course brochures; information accessible on the MIHE VLE; and other documentation, including staff and student handbooks and course information. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and professional support staff, and senior staff including awarding body representatives.

3.6 The website sets out the Institute's core objectives and mission statement. MIHE publishes information for prospective students on its website and in printed course brochures. Students confirmed that this helped them to select their programme with an understanding of the Institute and its programmes, staff and facilities. The website sets out clearly the admissions policies and the application procedures. However, as discussed in paragraph 1.28, published information on entry requirements for the BA Islamic Studies was inconsistent; the nature and purpose of the pre-registration stage for postgraduate research students is not fully documented (see paragraph 2.95); and information for staff and students setting out complaints procedures is inconsistent (see paragraph 2.81).

3.7 The Institute is currently progressing enhancements to the quality of public information. A new website is being developed and a prototype is being finalised. Once this is reviewed, the new website is expected to be in place by the end of this year.

3.8 Students said that handbook information is comprehensive and helpful and that they refer to it frequently. The MIHE Student Handbook, which is available on the VLE, helps students' understanding of the Institute's formalities and procedures, and provides a wealth of useful information, including details of faculty members and the administration team; attendance requirements; rules of conduct and computer code of conduct; library facilities

and regulations; visa, health and finance information; arrangements for submission of assignments; plagiarism policies, procedures and penalties; applications for reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities; and MIHE assessment regulations and hyperlink to Newman University Academic Regulations.

3.9 The Student Handbook is supplemented by individual course handbooks setting out course aims, distinctive features and structure; module specifications including assessment information; student support information; learning and teaching strategies; and quality assurance and enhancement information, including student engagement arrangements.

3.10 As noted in paragraph 2.48, the Student Charter explains in clear language what students can expect of the Institute, as well as outlining what is reasonably expected of students by the Institute. External examiner reports are available in full to students on the VLE, and students are aware that they can access the reports there.

3.11 In addition to the Higher Education Record of Achievement issued by Newman University, MIHE provides students with a clear ongoing record of their marks across all modules, and a final record of their marks and the credits completed at the end of their programme.

3.12 Staff have access to the Institute's quality assurance policies and procedures via the MIHE Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook and other associated documentation on the VLE. The Institutional Governance and Quality Assurance Handbook specifies minimum VLE materials requirements for teaching staff: definitive course and module information, including programme specifications, module descriptors and schemes of work; assessment information; learning resources; and staff availability. All this information was available and readily accessible on the VLE pages viewed by the review team. Course leaders and the Principal regularly monitor the VLE to ensure compliance with these requirements.

3.13 University representatives whom the review team met expressed confidence in the rigor of the Institute's processes for ensuring the accuracy of published information. However, while these processes are understood by staff and generally work well, they are not currently formally documented.

3.14 Overall, MIHE has in place and implements effective procedures to ensure that information produced for its intended audiences is fit for purpose and trustworthy. The review team concludes, however, that there is a need to document these processes formally and to ensure that they are consistently implemented. The review team **recommends** that the Institute formally documents and implements its processes for the approval of published information about higher education programmes, and ensures that all information is complete and consistent.

3.15 The Expectation is met. The associated level of risk is moderate, as although the procedures are broadly adequate there are some shortcomings in the rigor with which they are applied.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.16 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.17 The Expectation in Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision is met and the associated level of risk is moderate.

3.18 MIHE has in place mechanisms to ensure that the information it produces relating to its higher education programmes is fit for purpose and reliable. However, the review team identified some examples of inconsistency between information in different documents.

3.19 The review team concludes that although there are procedures for ensuring the accuracy of information across all media, these procedures are currently insufficiently formal and occasionally not rigorously applied. There is, therefore, one recommendation associated with this judgement area, that MIHE should formally document and implement its processes for the approval of published information. There are no affirmations associated with this judgement area and no areas of good practice.

3.20 The recommendation relating to this judgement area represents the completion of activity already underway that will allow MIHE to meet the Expectation more fully.

3.21 The review team finds that the quality of the Institute's information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1 MIHE states that it takes a strategic approach to the enhancement of student learning opportunities, and, through the use of quality assurance mechanisms and systems, identifies strategic enhancement priorities, which are fed through to highest levels of the institute for action. There is a newly constituted Academic Board, which will consider all annual monitoring reports and feed suggestions for enhancement that have budgetary implications through to the Management Board.

4.2 MIHE institutional strategic documents include the Strategic Plan 2015-20, the Strategy for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (SELTA), and the Action Plan prepared in response to the 2012 REO. The Strategic Plan outlines the key developments over the next five years, which are: Enhancement of the Student Experience; Achieving Academic Excellence; Building Sustainability; and Increasing Recruitment.

4.3 The Strategy for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Assessment has as one of its key priorities the enhancement of learning and teaching through a range of activities, including CPD for academic staff, use of feedback to identify enhancements, peer review of teaching, and course and institutional level staff/student meetings.

4.4 The processes outlined would allow the Expectation to be met.

4.5 The review team tested the Expectation through scrutiny of a range of documentation. The review team also held meetings with teaching and professional support staff and senior staff, including awarding partner representatives.

4.6 Through Course Committees, Staff Student Consultative Meetings and the QAA Student Submission students have raised issues about the poor wireless access on campus and the need for longer library opening hours, greater debate and interactivity in lectures, more social and recreation space on campus. Students confirmed that MIHE responded positively to each of these issues in turn, firstly by contracting an external company to upgrade the wireless access across the campus, secondly by extending the Library Opening hours, thirdly by introducing greater interactivity and lectures on campus, and finally by agreeing for students to lead a working group on the development of a Student Common room.

4.7 MIHE recently developed a part-time Learning and Teaching Coordinator role with a view to changing learning and teaching practice. One of the first suggestions from the post holder was to engage the use of an external academic in the peer review process. This peer review process has been well received by staff. The use of an external academic in the peer review process was identified as a feature of good practice in Expectation B3.

4.8 MIHE has gone through a four-year process of systematically reviewing and improving its quality assurance processes and has received positive views on these enhancements from staff and partner higher education institutions. In 2014 MIHE introduced online submission and marking in response to student requests, and this has been well received by students and staff.

4.9 MIHE recognises the need to continue to develop its strategic approach to enhancement and has started this process of activity through the recently formed Academic Board. The review team **affirms** the action taken on the development of a more strategic approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities.

4.10 The review team formed the view that MIHE has systems to identify and disseminate good practice and to make use of review mechanisms to identify opportunities for improvement. A range of enhancement initiatives linked to the Institute's various strategic intentions is ongoing. The review team concludes that the Institute is making progress to fully develop its strategic approach to enhancement. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and that the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.11 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.12 There is one Expectation in this judgement area, which is met and which is considered to present low risk. There are no areas of good practice. There is one affirmation in this judgement area, relating to the action taken on the development of a more strategic approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities.

4.13 MIHE has systems to identify and disseminate good practice and to make use of review mechanisms to identify opportunities for improvement. A range of enhancement initiatives is ongoing. The review team concludes that the Institute is making progress to fully develop its strategic approach to enhancement.

4.14 The review team finds that the Institute's approach to the enhancement of learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 During the review and redesign of the programmes for validation by Newman University in 2013, MIHE gave consideration to embedding key skills such as effective communication, time management, group working, problem solving and professional working, and some of these are reflected in the course aims and outcomes and teaching and learning strategies. However, the Institute acknowledges that more attention could have been given to this important area, and the review and development of current programmes for the next iteration of validation will provide the opportunity for further work on this.

5.2 Recognising the benefits of student employability not only to students but also to the wider community and the economy, MIHE took a strategic decision during 2014 to initiate action, and plans for the development of this area of its provision are gradually evolving. The Institute's approach is focused on the enhancement of links with potential employers and industry, and the design of new courses that will open up students' career pathways.

5.3 Early in 2014, the Institute introduced the annual student engagement day and careers fair, and further events were held in 2015 and 2016. The event is attended by external experts and practitioners from the banking, charitable and chaplaincy sectors, education, youth work and counselling, and includes a presentation on the development of employability skills. Experts from these areas have also shared their knowledge with students through sessions delivered within the programmes, as well as through the Public Lecture Series.

5.4 Students clearly appreciate the opportunities provided by the Institute for engagement with external experts, and noted in particular the presentations given by banking experts and a visit to the Bank of England and Lloyds Insurance organised by the Institute last year.

5.5 The Institute is progressing plans for the extension of its programme portfolio to include degrees with a greater employability focus. An internal course development consultation group has been established to take forward the design of a new master's programme, the MA in Islam and Development. Early discussions have included the consideration of feedback and case studies from experts with experience and practical involvement in international development projects and in work with the UN and governmental agencies. Longer term plans envisage the development of joint degrees with vocationally linked elements, such as BA Islamic Studies with Management.

5.6 Currently, MIHE has no data on graduate destinations. The Institute designed a graduate destinations survey, but because of the poor response to the first survey did not pursue a second survey. Participation in the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey is planned for 2016-17.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 22-25 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#)

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

Academic standards

The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Awarding organisation

An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications

Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.

See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.

See also **distance learning**.

Framework

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

Good practice

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes

What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Multiple awards

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Quality Code

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

Subject Benchmark Statement

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation

Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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